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DESCRIPTION OF A NEW *OTOCORIS* FROM CALIFORNIA

By HARRY C. OBERHOLSER

THE determination of the breeding Horned Lark of the northern Sierra Nevada has always been a puzzling question. The present writer tentatively referred birds from Summit, California, and Bald Mountain, Shasta County, California, to *Otocoris alpestris merrilli* (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., xxiv, June 9, 1902, pp. 835-836), but this identification was even at the time unsatisfactory, since they really much more closely resemble *Otocoris alpestris strigata*. Additional material recently studied shows that these birds represent a new race of *Otocoris alpestris*, which we propose to call

***Otocoris alpestris sierrae*, subsp. nov.**

Chars. subsp.—Similar to *Otocoris alpestris actia*, but upper parts darker; nape more cinnamonaceous; back more blackish and more contrasted with neck; and posterior lower parts usually decidedly tinged with yellow.

Description.—Type, adult male, no. 203534, U. S. Nat. Mus., Biological Survey collection; head of Pine Creek, Lassen County, California, June 13, 1906; A. S. Bunnell. Forehead and broad superciliary stripe, dull white, the former slightly washed with yellowish; crown and horns black; occiput and cervix between pecan brown and tawny, the former slightly darker; back and rump between mummy brown and fuscous, the feathers edged with sayal brown, cinnamon, and dull pinkish buff; shorter upper tail-coverts like the cervix, the long feathers cinnamon, their centers dark olive brown; middle tail-feathers dull wood brown, their central portions dark olive brown; remainder of tail dull black, the outer edge of the terminal part of the outer web of the outer pair of rectrices dull white; wings grayish olive brown, the inner edges of the secondaries brownish white, the outer vanes of the quills margined with cinnamon and dull pinkish buff, the exposed surface of the lesser and median wing-coverts, together with the outer edge of the greater coverts, like the cervix, but paler; a small spot behind each eye yellowish white; lores, and broad subocular stripe extended upward across the anterior portion of the auriculars and also downward below the auriculars, black; middle portion of the auriculars yellowish white, the posterior part becoming olivaceous; chin and throat, colonial buff, this color posteriorly paler and spreading up behind the auriculars; sides of neck and of breast like the cervix; broad jugular crescent black; rest of lower parts dull white, the abdomen cartridge buff, the breast washed with colonial buff and flecked with the color of the cervix, and the sides sayal brown streaked with the color of the cervix; thighs sayal brown; lining of wing white.

Measurements.—Male (eight specimens, from California): Wing, 94.5-105 (average, 100.3) mm.; tail, 65-72 (68.3); exposed culmen, 10-12.2 (11.1); tarsus, 20-22.5 (21.3); middle toe without claw, 11-12.2 (11.7).

Female (three specimens, from California): Wing, 89-95 (average, 92.7) mm.; tail, 64-68 (66); exposed culmen, 9.5-11 (10.2); tarsus, 20-21 (20.3); middle toe without claw, 11.2-11.5 (11.3).

Geographic distribution.—Breeds in the region of the Sierra Nevada in California, south to Placer County and north to Lassen County. Winters also in the Sacramento Valley.

Remarks.—This new race differs from *Otocoris alpestris rubea*, the range of which it approaches on the west, in its darker upper parts, more pinkish nape, which is more contrasted with the back, and in its more yellowish lower surface. It is smaller than *Otocoris alpestris merrilli*, and in the male has the nape much darker, more cinnamonaceous or ruddy, the upper parts much more tawny or rufescent, and the lower parts much more yellowish posteriorly. It is similar to *Otocoris alpestris insularis*, but is somewhat larger, and in the male is slightly more tawny above, although very close in the general color, and on the lower parts is more yellowish on the posterior portion. Also in fresh plumage it has less dusky spotting on the breast. In general appearance it is very much like *Otocoris alpestris strigata*, but is somewhat larger, with a rather

smaller bill, and in the male has the nape darker, more cinnamomeous, the other upper parts more ochraceous, less grayish, and somewhat darker, as well as the yellow of the lower parts of a more buffy shade. The female, too, has the upper parts darker, more ochraceous tawny, and the yellow below more buffy than the same sex of *Otocoris alpestris strigata*. In fact, this Sierra Nevada race looks really most like *Otocoris alpestris strigata*, from the breeding range of which, however, *Otocoris alpestris merrilli* completely isolates it in northern California and southern Oregon. Since *Otocoris alpestris sierrae* and *Otocoris alpestris strigata* are so much alike, some California winter individuals of the former have doubtless passed as the latter, but specimens recorded by the writer from Red Bluff and San Francisco, California (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., xxiv, June 9, 1902, p. 839), are true *Otocoris alpestris strigata*. There is in this new race the individual variation usual in the forms of *Otocoris alpestris*. Three breeding specimens from Milton, California, are intermediate between *Otocoris alpestris actia* and the present form, but though larger than the former and with a somewhat darker, more cinnamomeous nape, they are almost the same in color above and have no yellow on the posterior lower parts; so that they are, without much doubt, referable to *Otocoris alpestris actia*.

The present new race apparently does not breed in the Sacramento Valley, although it occurs there with seeming regularity in winter.

Detailed measurements of the specimens of *Otocoris alpestris sierrae* examined are given below.

MEASUREMENTS OF SPECIMENS OF *OTOCORIS ALPESTRIS SIERRAE*,
ALL FROM CALIFORNIA

Museum and No.	Sex	Locality	Date	Collector	Wing	Tail	Exposed culmen	Tarsus	Middle toe without claw
U.S.N.M.203534	♂	Head of Pine Creek, Lassen Co. ¹	June 13, 1906	A. S. Bunnell	100	67	11	21	11.8
U.S.N.M.203533	♂	Head of Pine Creek, Lassen Co.	June 13, 1906	A. S. Bunnell	96	65	11	21.8	11
U.S.N.M.203532	♂	Head of Pine Creek, Lassen Co.	June 13, 1906	A. S. Bunnell	101.5	71	10.8	20	12.2
U.S.N.M.166666	♂	Donner	July 8, 1900	W. K. Fisher	94.5	65	12.2	21	11.8
U.S.N.M.163961	♂	Bald Mt., Shasta Co.	Sept. 11, 1898	W. H. Osgood	101	66	12	22	11.5
U.S.N.M. 80477	♂	Yuba Co.	Feb. ..., 1877	L. Belding	101	69	10.9	20.8	11
U.S.N.M.124408	♂	Gridley	Jan. 25, 1891	L. Belding	103.5	72	11	22.5	12.2
J.E. Thayer 4231	♂	Enterprise, Butte Co.	Feb. 5, 1897	G. F. Bren- ninger	105	71	10	21	11.8
U.S.N.M.163962	[♀]	Bald Mt., Shasta Co.	Sept. 11, 1898	W. H. Osgood	95	68	11	21	11.2
U.S.N.M.106999	"♂" [♀]	Summit	Aug. 16, 1885	L. Belding	89	..	10	20	11.2
U.S.N.M. 98419	♀	Red Bluff	Dec. 19, 1883	C. H. Town- send	94	64	9.5	20	11.5

¹ Type.

Washington, D. C., September 26, 1919.